

Lamoine Real Estate Questionnaire—September 2017

Study conducted by: Dr. Kathryn Gaianguet and Dr. James Gallagher
Submitted to Lamoine Planning Board Public Hearing as part of testimony—November 9, 2017
Submitted to the Lamoine Appeals Board—March 2018

Summary of Answers

(From presentation at end of testimony presented by Kathryn Gaianguet)
(Tabulation of Answers and questionnaire packet attached)

This study shows: *there is a variable, but predominantly negative impact of gravel extraction in Lamoine on property values and marketability, and that the most significant impact is on the properties surrounding operating gravel pits.*

We mailed, or delivered, 30 questionnaires to all realtors with currently listed home sale properties in Lamoine as of August 18, 2017. We included a cover letter (in your packet along with the questionnaire) and a self-addressed/stamped envelope for returning the questionnaire.

One packet was returned as non-deliverable—so our research base is 29 realtor respondents. Ten (10) realtors returned completed questionnaires. This is a 34% response rate, very high for mailed questionnaires.

Here are the highlights of realtor responses:

1. Six of the ten realtors say that the presence and expansion of gravel pits affects—some or a great deal--the *price they propose* to sellers for their homes in Lamoine. One persons says it varies, specifically by the nearness to a pit, two say it makes little or no difference.
2. The *marketability of a home* is significantly affected by its *nearness to a pit*. Nine (9) realtors said that *proximity to a pit* affects a buyer's willingness to consider a property, either before or after a viewing.
3. Realtors split about half and half on their *desire to show a property to a prospective buyer*, again dependent on the *location of the pit*.
4. We presented options of possible effects of “the excavation of 'Cousin's Hill'” in the center of Lamoine, with persons being able to check all that applied.
 - Three (3) said it will *reduce the attractiveness of the Town as a place to live*.
 - Five (5) said it will *decrease property values in the surrounding area* (one responded “perhaps”)
 - Two (2) said it will have a *negative impact on property values in other parts of Lamoine*. (One answered “not sure”)
 - Two (2) responded that this pit *will discourage prospective buyers from viewing properties in any part of Lamoine*.
 - Three (3) realtors said that this proposed excavation will have *no affect on property values*.
5. To the question: “The gravel industry in Lamoine (check all that apply)”, responses varied:
 - 1 realtor is *discouraged from listing properties in Lamoine*
 - 2 realtor find the presence of the industry *discourages clients from viewing Lamoine properties*.
 - 4 realtors often or sometimes *are discouraged from showing properties in Lamoine*.
 - 6 realtors checked “*Does not affect willingness to promote or view properties in Lamoine.*”

We left sections for respondents to explain their answers, and make comments. The most frequent

comments were:

Marketability—or how many buyers interested in a property—is greatly affected by proximity to a working pit. Water quality (affect of abutting pit on household wells), extraction noise, and extent of truck traffic are the other main concerns. There is consensus that properties abutting or near the extraction sites are greatly impacted, and that Lamoine property distanced from extraction activities is generally not affected, unless it is on a main road with trucks constantly driving by. Some expressed the feelings that so many heavy trucks—especially trucks traveling at high speeds, are a safety hazard.

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Tabulation of Answers

***Note: The cover letter and blank questionnaire which each realtor received are attached for full information.*

Note: NA = No answer

1. Have you listed a property in Lamoine in the last:

	Yes	No	NA
5 years	10	0	
10 years	6	1	3

2. Have you sold a property in Lamoine in the last:

	Yes	No	NA
5 years	7	1	2
10 years	7	1	2

If you answered Yes above please answer all questions below: (If No, please go to Qs. 4-7)

3. Does the presence and expansion of gravel pits affect the price you propose to sellers of homes/property in Lamoine:

Great deal of effect	1
Some effect	5
Little effect	2
No effect	1
Variable	1

Please explain:

- It depends on the proximity to the pit as well as how active the gravel pit is.
- Pit doesn't affect price but definitely affects "marketability", ie. how many buyers will be interested in property.
- Gravel pits have not affected any sites for me.
- Entirely dependent on location of subject property and how exposed it would be to gravel extraction noise, truck traffic.
- Much of Lamoine is not impacted by gravel extraction, but some areas are greatly.
- It depends on the property location to the pit. Neighbor, yes. Traffic, noise if an abutter would greatly effect this property.
- Truck traffic.
- If reasonable proximity to "pits", price and demand can be affected.
- It depends on the buyer, frequency of gravel transport, noise level, etc. It has very little effect unless directly located nearby.

[Lamoine Real Estate Questionnaire, Tabulation of Answers, Cont.]

4. Does the proximity to a gravel pit negatively affect:

	Yes	No	NA
a. the market value of a property?	8	1	1
b. your desire to show a property to a client?	4	5	1
c. a client's willingness to consider a property (either before or after a viewing):	9	1	0

Please explain:

- If a home is in very good condition—a buyer may be more likely to consider it if it's near a pit. It's very situational.
- No unless right next to working pit's noise, dust, etc. Affects marketability.
- These answers are yes based on a property being right next door to a pit only.
- If you can hear gravel extraction=very bad. If trucks are constantly driving by subject property and have little buffer=very bad. Otherwise, not much difference to most buyers.
- If the property is next to the gravel pit=yes.
- Again, it would depend on activity if you are an abutter "greatly".
- Trucks & Equipment noise.
- If gravel trucks are on the road past a property I'm showing I make sure the sellers are aware of the business.
- Noise and visual considerations impact buyers' interest greatly. Proximity is a big variable.
- All subjective to the buyer—frequency of transport, noise level etc. Close proximity could be a negative.

5. The excavation of the "Cousins' Hill" in the center of Lamoine will: *(check all that apply)*

Reduce the attractiveness of the Town as a place to live.	3	1 "it depends"
Decrease property values in the surrounding area.	5	1 "perhaps"
Have a negative impact on property values for most other areas of Lamoine.	2	1 "not sure"
Discourage prospective buyers from viewing properties in Lamoine.	2	1 "it depends"
Not affect property values.	3	

6. The gravel industry in Lamoine *(check all that apply)*:

Discourages me from listing properties in the town.	1
Discourages my clients from viewing properties in Lamoine.	2
Often or sometimes prevents me from showing properties in Lamoine.	4
Does not affect willingness to promote or view properties in Lamoine.	6

7. Are there any other issues that you feel need to be considered?

- Most buyers not at home during working hours of pit. Bigger issue is truck traffic on main roads.
- Water quality, extraction noise, and fill truck traffic are the main value concerns. Most of Lamoine will be unaffected.
- Properties near the extraction site will be highly impacted.

[Lamoine Real Estate Questionnaire, Tabulation of Answers, Cont.]

7. Are there any other issues that you feel need to be considered? [Cont.]

--As mentioned under #5, what is the end result after excavation. The town may want to stipulate grassing, put guidelines on end result.

--Trucks travel ling on Douglas Highway often go above posted limit and visibility from many driveways is limited so high risk of crashes.

--The only pit I feel is justified in Lamoine is Jay Fowler's. He is a resident of Lamoine, makes his livelihood from the pit, has done a lot for the town and is a peach of a guy, as is his son.

--There are many factors that affect values in Lamoine, some good, some not so good. The school & budget support is a negative with buyers. I don't feel the gravel issue affects values—if no, not hugely and depends on proximity.

--As a realtor, I'm usually game to try a listing. But proximity to pits affect buyers greatly.

[Cover letter accompanying the Lamoine Real Estate Questionnaire—September 2017]

FROM: Kathryn Gaianguest and James Gallagher

TO: Realtors listing properties in Lamoine – past and present

RE: Sale values of homes in Lamoine

Please note: requesting quick response—Sept. 20, 2017

It has been a concern of Lamoine citizens for some time that the values of their homes are different from comparable properties in other communities (e.g., Blue Hill, Hancock) because of the presence of the gravel industry in our Town.

Town citizens are preparing for a September 27, 2017, public hearing on a proposal for excavating all of Cousins Hill on Rte. 184 in the center of town. This is the highest hill in Lamoine—240'--known for the large cross on its summit. The proposal is to remove all the hill to 30' below road level.

We need the best possible information in assessing the impact of this proposed extraction on neighbors to the pit, and on the whole town. As two retired sociology researchers, we have decided to gather systematic information about the possible relationship of the gravel industry to property values in the community.

Attached is a short questionnaire. Please use question 7, at the end, to share additional comments.

Your responses will be *completely anonymous*. All results will be presented *only in summary form*. No names, either personal or company, will be shared with any other parties. All questionnaires will remain only in our possession, and will be destroyed at the point of resolution of this pit application.

NOTE: Please respond by September 20, 2017.

A stamped, addressed envelope is enclosed.

Or you can send the questionnaire electronically to: kathryn.gaianguest@maine.edu

We deeply appreciate your help and assistance in this survey.

LAMOINE REAL ESTATE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Have you listed a property in Lamoine in the last:

5 years: ☐ Yes ☐ No

10 years: ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Have you sold a property in Lamoine in the last:

5 years: ☐ Yes ☐ No

10 years: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered Yes above please answer all questions below: (If No please go to Q. 4 - 7)

3. Does the presence and expansion of gravel pits affect the price you propose to sellers of homes/property in Lamoine:

☐ Great deal of effect

☐ Some effect

☐ Little effect

☐ No effect

Please explain: _____

4. Does the proximity to a gravel pit negatively affect:

a. the market value of a property?

☐ Yes ☐ No

b. your desire to show a property to a client?

☐ Yes ☐ No

c. a client's willingness to consider a property (either before or after a viewing)

☐ Yes ☐ No

Please explain: _____

[Lamoine Real Estate Questionnaire, Cont.]

5. The excavation of the "Cousin's Hill" in the center of Lamoine will: *(check all that apply)*

☐ reduce the attractiveness of the Town as a place to live.

☐ decrease property values in the surrounding area.

☐ have a negative impact on property values for most other areas of Lamoine.

☐ discourage prospective buyers from viewing properties in Lamoine.

☐ not affect property values.

6. The gravel industry in Lamoine (check all that apply):

☐ Discourages me from listing properties in the town

☐ Discourages my clients from viewing properties in Lamoine

☐ Often or sometimes prevents me from showing properties in Lamoine

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7. Are there any other issues that you feel need to be considered?

All of your answers will be treated with complete confidentiality. All data will be presented only in summary form. If you wish any further information, please contact us at:

Telephone: 207-667-1282

Address: 128 Great Ledge Road, Lamoine, ME 04605

Please return in pre-addressed, stamped envelope, or electronically to: kathryn.gaianguest@maine.edu

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Kathryn Gaianguest, Sociologist, Assoc. Professor Emerita, University of Maine

James Gallagher, Sociologist, Assoc. Professor Emeritus, University of Maine

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Please explain: _____

[Lamoine Real Estate Questionnaire, Cont.]

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